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Sample Assessment Items Released for Public Review & Comment

MONTPELIER –The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced) recently released a set of sample assessment items and performance tasks online for public review. Developed in collaboration with educators and content experts, the sample items and tasks are meant to help teachers, administrators, and policymakers better understand the Common Core State Standards and to prepare for the implementation of the Smarter Balanced assessments.

“These sample items will provide Vermont teachers with an early look into the rigor and complexity students will see on the Smarter Balanced assessments,” said Education Commissioner Armando Vilaseca. The Smarter Balanced sample items and performance tasks provide an advance look at the types of questions students will encounter when the assessments are implemented in the 2014-15 school year. Educators can use them to begin planning the shifts in instruction that will be required to help students meet the demands of the new assessments.

“Vermont shares the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium’s vision of how technology could be used to improve student assessment,” said Commissioner Vilaseca. The samples are comprised of nearly 50 assessment items and performance tasks, including examples of innovative, technology-enhanced items that take advantage of computer-based administration to assess a deeper understanding of content and skills.

In addition, sample performance tasks showcase the extended classroom-based activities students will experience as part of the Smarter Balanced assessment system. The Smarter Balanced assessment system uses performance tasks to measure skills valued by higher education and the workplace—critical thinking, problem solving, and communication—that are not adequately assessed by most statewide assessments today.

The sample items and performance tasks include several features to help teachers, students, and parents prepare for the new assessments. Each item has detailed information about the standards and assessment targets being measured. In addition, most selected-response and technology-enhanced items can be automatically scored,

providing instant feedback to users. Scoring rubrics are available for constructed-response items and performance tasks.

Smarter Balanced is working with K-12 teachers and higher education faculty to write and review assessment items and performance tasks. Among those that provided feedback on draft items and tasks was Student Achievement Partners, an organization founded by contributing authors of the Common Core State Standards.

The sample items and performance tasks can be accessed from the Smarter Balanced website at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/sample-items-and-performance-tasks/>.

Smarter Balanced welcomes comment and feedback on the sample items and performance tasks. Educators and interested stakeholders can submit feedback online at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/sample-items-and-performance-tasks-questions-and-feedback/>.

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